

WORSHIP SERVICE 25 JULY 2021 - IS IT POSSIBLE

Welcome to our service today. I will ask you to pray with me. Let us pray'

Father God, as we worship you today, open our mind, open our ears, open our heart and spirit to your leading. We want to give you glory and honour as we worship you today. Amen

Let us listen to our first hymn – Let us sing to the God of salvation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8pFxKuRN3A>

IS IT POSSIBLE EVEN TODAY?

I want to take you on a journey. This journey requires us all to use our imagination. During the journey we will meet three special people who will be our teachers. They will bring us some spiritual truths that are timeless.

We will hear of one person's search for answers and who will eventually find reality. We will hear of another person being challenged to talk about her faith and the tension that she finds in doing so.

On this journey, we will hear some bible passages that are appropriate and important for all of us, We will also listen to some hymns and Christian songs.

In all,

I welcome you to the service entitled: ***'IS IT POSSIBLE EVEN TODAY?'***

Now the story starts in the year 2021. Morgan is a thriving town of some 3500 people. The town boasts of a busy primary school, shops, a service station and a supermarket and of course the local Golden Nugget Hotel. Recently the old Presbyterian Church has been pulled down and a smart hall has been built right next to it. Both the school and this new independent church building are side by side on the main road some 200 meters from the town centre.

The Church has recently started a ladies friendship club run by the local Pastor's wife, Natalie. It seems to be meeting the needs of many of the

ladies of the area, as many of their husbands work in the nearby city of Nashworth.

Two of the participants of the friendship group were walking home together chatting along the way, Marion and Elsie. Marion is an older woman about 65 and Elsie a little younger mum of 45. Marion lost her husband in a mining accident 20 years ago and her children have gone overseas to work. They are both in America.

Elsie's two boys and her younger daughter attend the high school in Nashworth, as live in students. So she only has them home on Friday nights and sees them off on the bus very early Monday mornings.

Elsie starts the conversation after they have finished the talk about the meeting,

Elsie: Marian, you go to the church here don't you?

Marion: Yes, I generally attend each week if I can. Sometimes one of the children might call me from America and we could chat for too long, then I just have to stay home. But I do catchup with things at the local study group later in the week. Why Elsie what's wrong.

E: Oh nothing really but Bert is away on these long road trips, He drives a long haulage truck for a company in Nashworth and he is away most of the week. It's sometimes hard to discuss stuff with him over the mobile phone and I do get a little lonely at times.

M: Well you can always talk to me. I'd come round a chat with you sometime, you are only round the corner and a few doors from another friend.

E: Would you do that Marion. I would be so pleased if we could get together sometime. (2)

M: How about on Friday morning. Say 10.00 am.

E: That would be great, yes thank you. We'll have a coffee.

M: And I'll bring the nibblies.

With that the two women parted to be ready to meet again that Friday.

Let us listen to our next hymn Help us to accept each other as Christ accepted us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bqkTMO5fW8>

Friday has arrived and Marian and Elsie have just started their morning tea and Elsie opens up during the pouring of the coffee.

E: It's so good to have someone else in the house to chat with. How do you get on, Marian, you are on your own too.

M: When I get lonely and that happens quite a lot I just talk with God.

E: Well I suppose I believe in God or something up there but I would find it hard to believe that he would listen to me.

M: Why?

E: I don't think God would be interested in me. I don't go to church, I have been known to swear a lot at my husband Bert and all that. I would really have to reform before I think he would listen to me. And I am not able to change who I am.

M: That is interesting. I was a lot like that in the past.

E: Well what happened. How did you change. What did you do? (2 Mins)

M: It's a rather strange story really but when my James died I was trying to look after a seven year old and a four year old and out here it was quite different then as the town was much smaller and I was just a younger mum. I had married later in life and so the children were more of a handful than if I was ten years younger. On top of that I had a few health problems. They are all gone now, thankfully.

E: But you said you were a lot like me, How? Were you angry? Or What!!

M: You just picked it straight away. Yes, I was angry that my husband James had died in that horrible accident and I drank too much. Just loved vodka of all things... Yuck! That sickens me now. But at last I just had to get someone in to help with the children especially the younger one and Louise was just so calm. I asked her for her secret and she said simply praying to God. And I tried it. It worked for me, I felt calmer than before and talking all my worries to God, seemed to make them not go away but more manageable. It was soon after that that my helper, Louise became a close friend and the next thing I learned more about the love of God for even me.

E: Maybe I should just try praying to God then. He might just calm me down when the pressure gets to me.

M: Worth a try. Want me to pray with you now, just to start you off?

E: Marion, I would feel a bit embarrassed buuut I'll listen and maybe get a few tips as you say your prayers. Why not?

With that Marion prays a prayer thanking God for the friendship that is starting to form between Elsie and Marion. She asks that Elsie might have freedom to quietly tell God anything at all. The both say Amen and then the phone rings.

It turns out to be Bert, Elsie's husband. He will be home in two hours and so Marion departs to take up the friendship at a later date. (5 mins)

The story Jesus told about the two men who went up to the temple to pray is so appropriate here. It comes from Luke 18: 9 – 14. ***(Read by third person,)***

Over the next two months a real friendship grew between Elsie and Marion, they sat with one another at the Friendship group and had a meal together at the local restaurant. Then Marion broached the subject of prayer again as they walked home together after a friendship group lunch.

Marion: How are your prayers going Elsie?

E: Not very well. I told God what was happening to me and how I felt and asked him for help to stop my swearing and anger. He just said nothing.

M: Did you expect him to speak to you?

E: I don't know, it was just nothing.

M: Have you tried again?

E: No not really, although I must admit after that first prayer, if that's what it was, I did feel a little better for the time. But then something happened in the kitchen and off I went again. It's not working for me.

M: How about if we get together again and we will talk to God like He was with us in the conversation. Just like three people chatting with two of us just talking and He would be listening in?

E: That would be O.K. I guess.

M: What about now at my place?

E: Yes! Why not?

So the two women walked in to Marion's home and made themselves comfortable and then Marion said:

M: You know that if this gets too heavy for you, just say so and we will stop.

E: I think I know you enough now that you will stop before I call a halt. I notice you got your bible out as we walked into the room. Why do you need that?

M: It's a habit I got into when I am praying at home. It's there just if I think of some bible passage that might help me in a particular situation. Is that O.K.?

E: Oh yes, I just wondered.

With that the two women sat quietly and Marion opened up thanking God for their friendship. Elsie said, ***Thanks too God, sorry, I spoke out of turn.***

M: No, Elsie, God hears us just as we talk together with Him. That was good!

E: I am very new with this thing so please forgive me if I butt in sometimes.

M: Elsie God loves all of us and if we are faithful to believe in Him, He'll hear us and answer us when He is ready.

E: Can I tell God that I want to do the right thing but I get so angry at times when things don't go right and I know I should be quiet but my angry self gets in the way. Marion is God listening to me now?

M: He certainly is Elsie.

E: Er.. God can you help me to be a better, quieter person. Was that O.K. Marion? And I would want to be more like her. Not the same as her. I know that I have got to be myself but I want a bit more of what she have got. Does that make sense?

M: Yes, it does make sense to me. What I think you are saying that you want to know God more than you do now. Is that right?

E: Yes! Can you help me God? Marion, do you think He's listening?

M: He is all ears!

E: But I don't know where to start, can you help me?

M: Well I will need to show you some bible passages that have helped me.

E: Well go ahead, I might be too dumb to understand, will God help me understand?

M: I'm sure He will. Do you have a bible Elsie?

E: Somewhere in the house but it's so old. Yours looks different but seems to be plenty used. Is that right?

M: I read it every day and so let us look at some bits about sin and forgiveness.

E: Isn't there something about Easter and Jesus dying on a cross and coming back to life. We had all that in our scripture classes at school?

With that opening, Marion spoke to Elsie about how all people have sinned and that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sin. She turned to her bible and shared some scriptures with Elsie. She quoted from Romans 6: 23 about the wages of sin is death. That scared Elsie but she went on to say that it meant separation from God and that when we ask Jesus to come into our lives then he will forgive us and help us to live a forgiven life. This forgiven life leads to living forever with Jesus when we eventually die and it helps us to live a greater and more rewarding life here on earth.. Marion was quick to point out that when we stumble in our faith He is there to forgive us if we are prepared to confess our sins to Him and ask his cleansing. Marion shared quite a few scriptures that day including Revelation 3:20 and Ephesians 2:8 – 10. John 1: 12 – 14 and 3:16 ***Reader Brings those passages to us.***

This leads us to a favourite Hymn: What a Friend we have in Jesus.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znWu2HCJ92c>

E: But how do I ask Jesus to forgive me and C O M E into my life. ? Do I say Come in Lord Jesus or something?

M: If you are keen to say that prayer, Jesus is a gentleman and will answer you prayer by being part of your life. He will come into your heart and live there in the power of His Spirit.

E: Well I want to say that prayer. Come into my heart Lord Jesus.

Into my heart, into my heart

Come into my heart Lord Jesus,

Come in today, come in to stay,

Come into my heart Lord Jesus.

After giving thanks and suggesting that Elsie get her bible and start reading parts from what Marion had shared with her, she went home elated and very tired in a good way. . But the big test will come later when Bert and the children are home.

As Elsie read her bible, she wondered sometimes what had happened to her. She was pleased to think that she was forgiven and that Jesus was "in her life and heart" but there were times when she certainly didn't feel it. So she spoke to Marion again soon after.

E: Marian, how do I know Jesus is in my life and heart, there are times when I don't feel it?

M: It's not about feelings so much as believing God's word. If he said that he would come into our heart he does. If he says he has forgiven us, he has. We need to trust in his word.

E: I guess that I don't know enough about his word the bible, I have read over and over the verses you gave me but I just feel a baby compared to you.

M. Well maybe it is time we looked together at a few more passages and did it say, once a week after our time at the Friendship group. That could be helpful.

E. I'd like that. 'cause I want to know more.

And so Elsie and Marion met together at Elsie's home for the next six weeks.

(6)

Time went by and Marion saw that there was more confidence in Elsie, the old self seemed to be fading and her new confidence showed through even in her involvement in the Friendship Group.

This is an unfinished story. What will the next phase of Elsie's life look like? Will she start helping another person find peace and comfort in the Lord?

We know that Salvation is for all people everywhere. The Good News of Jesus is timeless. So it is up to us and other believers to do our part in sharing this Good News with others, one at a time.

Pray that God will lead you to another person who may just need someone like you to share the Gospel with them. God is faithful He will lead you there at just the right time. Amen

We listen to - I the Lord of Sea and Sky.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcXOkht8w7c>

Benediction.